



Mail

Initiating a urinary stream

To the editor,

We have found, in obtaining urine specimens from patients, that one way to initiate a urinary stream is for the individual to place the soles of his or her feet on something cold. This can easily be done in the bathroom, by placing the plantar surface of the foot on the cold floor. This action rapidly causes the initiation of micturition.

We consulted various books about acupuncture, thinking that this phenomenon

may somehow be related to this ancient Chinese art. Much to our amazement, we found that 1 of the 12 meridians along which lie the acupuncture points is called the bladder line. This bladder meridian connects the bladder with the undersurface of the foot. Furthermore, adjacent to the bladder meridian is the kidney meridian, which also passes through the balls of the feet and up to the kidneys. An engraving taken from Andreas Cleyer's *Specimen Medicinae Sinicae* (1682) shows this meridian, indicating that acupuncture was known in the West during the 17th century.¹

We consulted a noted acupuncturist in southern California (Matthew Bauer, written communication, August 22, 2000) who told us that acupuncturists do indeed elicit trigger points on the balls of the feet to initiate urination. Furthermore, because the bladder meridian has trigger points on top of the head, Bauer mentioned that acupuncturists stimulate points on top of the head to induce an opposite effect, that is, treatment of incontinence. This treatment occurs in conjunction with a regimen of Kegel exercises.

This information can lead to an appreciation for acupuncture, although doubt remains with regard to the many claims and explanations of how it works.

Rudolf E Noble

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Renā via dimmūtā. a pedibus ad pectoris medium.



The kidney meridian as shown in *Specimen Medicinae Sinicae* (1682)

References

- 1 Lyons AS, Petrucelli RJ 2nd. *Medicine: An Illustrated History*. New York: Ardale Press, 1987, p 445.

capsule

Appendicitis in pregnancy Acute appendicitis is the most common extrauterine indication for laparotomy in pregnancy, and it can occur in any trimester. Diagnosis can be difficult. Conventional wisdom has been that the site of the pain migrates upward with the growing uterus. But a case series in the *American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology* (2000;182:1027-1029) refutes this belief: right lower quadrant pain was the most common presenting symptom regardless of trimester.